

REMARKS

By this Response, Applicants propose to amend claims 1 and 11 and cancel claims 7 and 17 by incorporation into independent claims 1 and 11, respectively. No further claims have been added. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-12, 14-16, and 18-21 remain pending. Support for the amendments to claims 1 and 11 can be found throughout the as-filed specification and claims, in particular at paragraphs [0044]. No new matter has been added.

In the event that the Examiner declines to enter the present Amendment, and (i) any portion of the present Amendment would place some of the claims in better form for appeal if a separate paper were filed containing only such amendments or (ii) any proposed amendment to any claim would render that claim allowable, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner inform Applicants of the same pursuant to MPEP §714.13.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants are pleased to note the Examiner's indication of allowable claim 21. In addition, the Examiner objected to claims 4-8 and 14-18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but identifies these claims as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Responsive to the Examiner's objection, dependent claims 7 and 17 have been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 11, respectively, thereby rendering each

independent claim and all corresponding dependent claims allowable over the applied references.

Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 9-12 and 19-20 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 9-12 and 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Alfred et al.* (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0187808). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The subject matter of claims 1 and 11 now include the allowable subject matter of dependent claims 7 and 17 respectively. Thus, each of independent claims 1 and 11 should now be considered allowable over the applied references.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 2, 9-12 and 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants further respectfully submit that claims 2, 9, 10; and 12, 19-20 are in condition for allowance, at least by virtue of their dependency from allowable claims 1 and 11, respectively.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing all remaining claims into condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments of claims 1 and 11 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the final action by the Examiner presented some new arguments as to the application of the art against Applicant's invention. It is respectfully submitted that the entering of the Amendment would allow the Applicants to reply to the final rejections and place the application into condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants submit that entry of the amendment would place the application into better form for Appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references applied against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

If the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of the instant application, the Examiner is invited to contact the

undersigned at the telephone number listed below to expedite resolution of any outstanding issues.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 50-2961.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: September 25, 2008

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